

Eleven years ago, on the first World AIDS Day, we vowed to put an end to the AIDS epidemic. Eleven years from now, I hope we can say that the steps we took today made that end come about. If it happens, it will be in no small measure because of people like you in this room, by your unfailing, passionate devotion to this cause, a cause we see most clearly expressed in the two people sitting right behind me.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Amy Slemmer, HIV/AIDS activist, who introduced the President, her adopted daughter, Cynthia, and Carla Edwina Barrett, Cynthia's biological mother.

Radio Remarks Announcing Housing Grants for People With AIDS

December 1, 1998

For too many Americans living with AIDS, poverty is nearly as much a threat as the disease itself. People with AIDS face enormous medical bills and are often too sick to hold a job. Without our help, many would be forced to live in unfit housing or even to become homeless. We must not turn our backs on these Americans when they need us most. Today I am announcing \$221 million in grants that will help meet the housing needs of the 85,000 Americans who have AIDS and those who live with a family member with the disease. These grants, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, will mean that people fighting AIDS don't have to also fight to keep a roof over their heads.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 5:47 p.m. on November 24 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1.

Proclamation 7153—World AIDS Day, 1998

December 1, 1998

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

On World AIDS Day, we are heartened by the knowledge that our unprecedented investments in AIDS research have resulted in new treatments that are prolonging the lives of many people living with the disease. Thousands of scientists, health care professionals, and patients themselves have joined together to advance our understanding of HIV and AIDS and improve treatment options. Because of the heroic efforts of these people, fewer and fewer Americans are losing their lives to AIDS, and for that we are immensely thankful.

But the AIDS epidemic is far from over. Within racial and ethnic minority communities, HIV and AIDS are a severe and ongoing crisis. While the number of deaths in our country attributed to AIDS has declined for 2 consecutive years, AIDS remains the leading killer of African American men aged 25–44 and the second leading killer of African American women in the same age group. African Americans, who comprise only 13 percent of the U.S. population, accounted for 43 percent of new AIDS cases in 1997 and 36 percent of all AIDS cases. Hispanic Americans represent just 10 percent of our population, but they account for more than 20 percent of new AIDS cases; and AIDS is also becoming a critical concern to Native American and Asian American communities. Young people of every racial and ethnic community are also disproportionately impacted by AIDS, both in the number of new AIDS cases and in the number of new HIV infections. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that approximately half of all new HIV infections in the United States occur in people under age 25 and that one-quarter occur in people under age 22.